



## **Mental Health Update February 9, 2007**

### **Department of Justice Report on VDH Website**

The Vermont Department of Justice released their report following the first monitoring visit to the Vermont State Hospital. Click here to view the report:

<http://healthvermont.gov/mh/programs/hospital/documents/DoJReport020107.pdf>

### **FUTURES PROJECT**

#### **Futures Advisory Committee**

AHS Secretary Cindy LaWare described some of the budget challenges facing the agency in fiscal year 2008, which will begin on July 1<sup>st</sup>. The Governor's budget proposal for Mental Health has a total increase of 11.3% over the current year while the overall state budget general fund is proposed to increase by 3.16%. The growth in the Mental Health budget is for:

- Children's collaborative programs
- Designated agency increases
- Futures Project community resources and staffing
- Vermont State Hospital

The Advisory Committee discussed the structure, authority, and viability of the Vermont State Hospital Governing Body, responding to an analysis from Wendy Beininger, AAG. The committee began a discussion of state hospital oversight, taking up a resolution from the National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) to reconstitute the Board of Mental Health. The committee will resume discussion of the governance issue at its February 26<sup>th</sup> meeting after more research is completed.

The Advisory Committee also considered and indicated support for the next steps of care management system implementation:

- An RFP for design services to develop the system, and
- A pilot project to be implemented in a single community that has both a crisis bed program and a local hospital psychiatric unit.

The minutes of the January 29<sup>th</sup> Advisory Committee meeting are posted on the website.

### **Crisis Beds Review Panel Named**

Representatives from the National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI), Vermont Psychiatric Survivors (VPS), and the Adult Program Standing Committee will serve on a review panel along with VDH/Division of Mental Health staff to evaluate and provide input on the crisis bed proposals from designated agencies. Larry Lewack, NAMI; Jackie Leman, VPS; Marty Roberts, Adult Standing Committee; Heidi Hall, VDH Business office; and Frank Reed, DMH, will participate on the panel.

Agencies will present their proposals at a public session on February 20 at the Hampton Inn, Colchester, off exit 16 of I-89, from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. This will be followed by a public hearing on February 26 in the Skylight room of the Waterbury State Complex from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

### **Secure Residential Program Development**

Developing residential capacity is a core component of the Futures Plan. The work group will *not* meet on the originally scheduled date of February 14<sup>th</sup> as a program developer is yet to be determined. The group will re-convene under the co-leadership of a residential program developer and the Futures staff.

### **Peer Support Program Development**

As opportunities for peers continue to expand, it becomes more of a challenge to fill positions. Training together with agency staff builds understanding and mutual support. Crisis bed programs are looking for peer supports. Talking to legislators and having them hear the voice of peers is crucial to gaining needed support. Participation of peers in the most worthwhile conferences and trainings also helps to bring about genuine openness by designated agencies to bring peers into the process.

The Peer Support Work Group met this week to discuss these and other issues. They are thinking through their recommendations, and will develop a draft that brings together all that they have considered from the peer perspective.

### **Care Management Work Group**

The minutes of the January 26<sup>th</sup> Care Management Work Group meeting are posted on the website.

### **VERMONT STATE HOSPITAL CENSUS**

The Vermont State Hospital Census was 51 as of midnight Wednesday night. The average census for the past 45 days was 52.